
The Triennial Comprehensive Report on Immigration

Part I

Population Impacts

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International Migration to the United States

Abstract

Aliens can be admitted legally to the United States in numerous ways: As immigrants, nonimmigrants, refugees, asylees, and parolees. Some of these statuses confer a right to remain permanently, and some are temporary. Because an alien entering in one category can change status to another, these categories are not mutually exclusive. This chapter presents and analyzes data on the various types of aliens admitted to the United States from Fiscal Year (FY) 1995 to FY 1997 and discusses admissions for FYs 1998-2002. In addition, this chapter provides estimates of the emigration of persons residing in the United States and of the resident illegal alien population.

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Legal Immigrants

Introduction

The number of immigrants granted legal permanent residence in the United States during FYs 1995-1997 was 2.43 million, or an average of 800,000 per year. Legal immigration was 14-18 percent less than expected during this period because of a backlog in immigrant applications awaiting a decision at the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). There was no evidence of a decline in the demand to immigrate during FYs 1995-1997. Legal immigration was 9 percent lower in FYs 1995-1997 than FYs 1992-1994, when 2.68 million aliens, or 900,000 per year, became legal permanent residents.

This section provides summary information on immigration law, definitions and concepts, the immigrant application backlog, and other factors that may have affected legal immigration in FYs 1995-1997. Data are presented on trends in selected characteristics of persons who became legal permanent residents during this period compared with the previous three years. Projections of legal immigration through FY 2002 are also included.

Data on immigration shown in this section were obtained from INS administrative records. These data provide information on the flow of aliens who become legal permanent residents during a year or other specified time period.¹ The year of admission or adjustment to legal permanent residence is generally not the same as the year of entry for aliens who live in the United States some time before becoming legal residents (for example, refugees, asylees, or students and temporary workers who obtain permanent jobs and are able to adjust their status under an employment category).

Immigration Law and Definitions

Immigrants are persons admitted to the United States for permanent residence, who either have immigrant visas issued overseas or adjust their status in the United States to permanent residence. Included as immigrants are persons entering the United States for the first time with immigrant visas, persons adjusting their status from temporary nonimmigrant categories to permanent resident status, and refugees and asylees who have fulfilled their residency requirements and are becoming permanent residents.

Under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), legal immigrant status is granted for three primary reasons: for family reunification, to supply needed labor for U.S. employers, and for humanitarian concerns. Annual limits set by the Immigration Act of 1990 determine worldwide immigration levels for family preferences (relatives of legal permanent residents and relatives of U.S. citizens other than spouses, parents, and children), employment preferences (aliens with certain job skills), and diversity immigrants (aliens from historically low immigrant sending countries). Since FY 1995, the maximum annual limit for preference and diversity immigrants has been 675,000 (see Table 1-1). Minimum limits for family and employment preferences are 226,000 and 140,000, respectively.² Diversity immigration is limited to 55,000 annually.

¹ The Census Bureau provides information on the total foreign-born population at one point in time. Census data distinguish citizens from noncitizens but make no distinction between legal and illegal residents.

² The annual limits on family and employment preferences may fluctuate from year to year because the previous year's total of preference immigrants, immediate relatives of U.S. citizens, and other categories consisting of very small numbers of immigrants affects the current year's limits. Unused family preferences are included in the calculation of the current year's employment preference limit. Unused employment preferences and the number of immediate relatives of U.S. citizens admitted for legal permanent residence in the previous year are included in the calculation of the current year's family preference limit. In FY 1996, the limit on family preferences was set at nearly 312,000 (86,000 above the normal 226,000 limit) because increases in adjustment of status applications pending a decision during FY 1995 resulted in fewer than expected approvals for immediate relatives of U.S. citizens and employment preferences.

Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens are not subject to any numerical limitation. This has been the single largest category of immigrants since 1986 excluding aliens who were legalized under the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986.

Refugees and asylees are the other major categories of legal immigrants. Although there are no limits on the number of refugees that may be granted legal permanent residence each year, the number of aliens admitted to the United States as refugees is limited by an annual ceiling established by the President in consultation with Congress. There is no limit on the number of persons who can be granted asylum, but asylees wishing to adjust to legal permanent residence are subject to a 10,000 annual limit.

The remaining categories of immigrants tend to have either time bound limits (e.g., Soviet and Indochinese parolees) or numerical limits (e.g., cancellation of removal) and represent a very small percentage of immigrants. During FYs 1995-1997, these categories accounted for less than 2 percent of all legal immigrants.

Adjustment of Status Application Backlog

Between FY 1994 and FY 1995, the number of adjustment of status applications received at INS nearly doubled from 317,000 to 578,000 (see Chart 1-1). Most of this increase is attributable to a shift in the immigrant application workload from the Department of State (DOS) to INS that resulted from implementation of the Section 245(i) provision of immigration law. Section 245(i) was in effect from October 1994 to January 1998. It allowed illegal aliens who were living in the United States and eligible for permanent residence to pay a penalty fee and apply for adjustment of status at the INS office. Previously, they were required to leave the country and obtain a visa abroad from the DOS. As an indication of workload shift, adjustments of status represented 39 percent of all legal immigrants in FY 1994, 47 percent in FY 1995, 54 percent in FY 1996 and 52 percent in FY 1997.

The number of adjustment of status applications continued to increase after FY 1995 and reached 759,000 by the end of FY 1997. The increase during FYs 1996 and 1997 may be partly due to the naturalization of aliens legalized under IRCA who then sponsored immediate relatives for immigrant status. By the end of FY 1996, nearly 300,000 IRCA legalized aliens had naturalized, many of whom had immediate relatives (spouses, children, and parents) who were exempt from annual limits and could apply for legal permanent residence without a wait.

Adjustment of status application processing at INS failed to keep pace with the volume of applications received beginning in FY 1995. The 'normal' pending caseload, which had averaged about 120,000 each year through FY 1994, doubled by the end of FY 1995, continued to increase during FY 1996 and reached nearly 700,000 by the end of FY 1997. A backlog in the naturalization application caseload may also have contributed to the adjustment of status application backlog in FY 1997, when INS's efforts to reduce the naturalization backlog may have diverted some resources to that work.

INS estimates that legal immigration would have been approximately 350,000-450,000 higher during the FY 1995-1997 period had adjustment of status applications pending a decision not increased beyond the pre-FY 1995 level. These estimates are based on several assumptions. First, the historical application denial rate of 7 percent would continue through FYs 1995-1997. Second, 15 percent of applications were for family preferences, none of which contribute to an increase in pending. The DOS regulates immigration under the preference system to match the annual limits as closely as possible and compensates for a decline in adjustment of status preference applications by issuing visas to aliens abroad on what is a lengthy waiting list of preference applicants. The DOS process tends to insure that the total number of family preference applicants will be near the annual limit each year regardless of the number of pending adjustment of status applications even though individual applicants may experience delays in getting their applications adjudicated. It should be noted that unlike family preferences, there is little waiting time for most employment preferences (except third preference unskilled workers), so that an increase in pending caseload would tend to lower legal immigration. The lower bound estimate of 350,000 takes into account

the increase in the family preference limit that occurred in FY 1996 because of pending adjustment of status applications in FY 1995.

Table 1-1 — Preference Categories of Immigrants Subject to the Numerical Limits: FYs 1992-1997

Preference	Provision	FYs 1992-1994	FYs 1995-1997
Family-sponsored immigrants		465,000 ¹	480,000 ¹
Family-sponsored preferences		226,000	226,000
First	Unmarried sons and daughters of U.S. citizens	23,400 ²	23,400 ²
Second	Spouses, children, and unmarried sons and daughters of permanent resident aliens	114,200 ³	114,200 ³
Third	Married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens	23,400 ³	23,400 ³
Fourth	Brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens (at least 21 years of age)	65,000 ³	65,000 ³
Immediate relatives of adult U.S. citizens (spouses, children, and parents) and children born abroad to alien residents		Not limited Assumed to be 239,000 ¹	Not limited Assumed to be 254,000 ¹
Employment-based preferences		140,000	140,000
First	Priority Workers	40,040 ⁴	40,040 ⁴
Second	Professionals with advanced degrees or aliens of exceptional ability	40,040 ³	40,040 ³
Third	Skilled workers, professionals, needed unskilled workers	40,040 ³	40,040 ³
Fourth	Special immigrants	9,940	9,940
Fifth	Employment creation ("Investors")	9,940	9,940
IRCA Legalization Dependents		55,000	-----
Diversity		40,000	55,000
Total		700,000¹	675,000¹

Note: The annual limit is adjusted based on visa usage in the previous year.

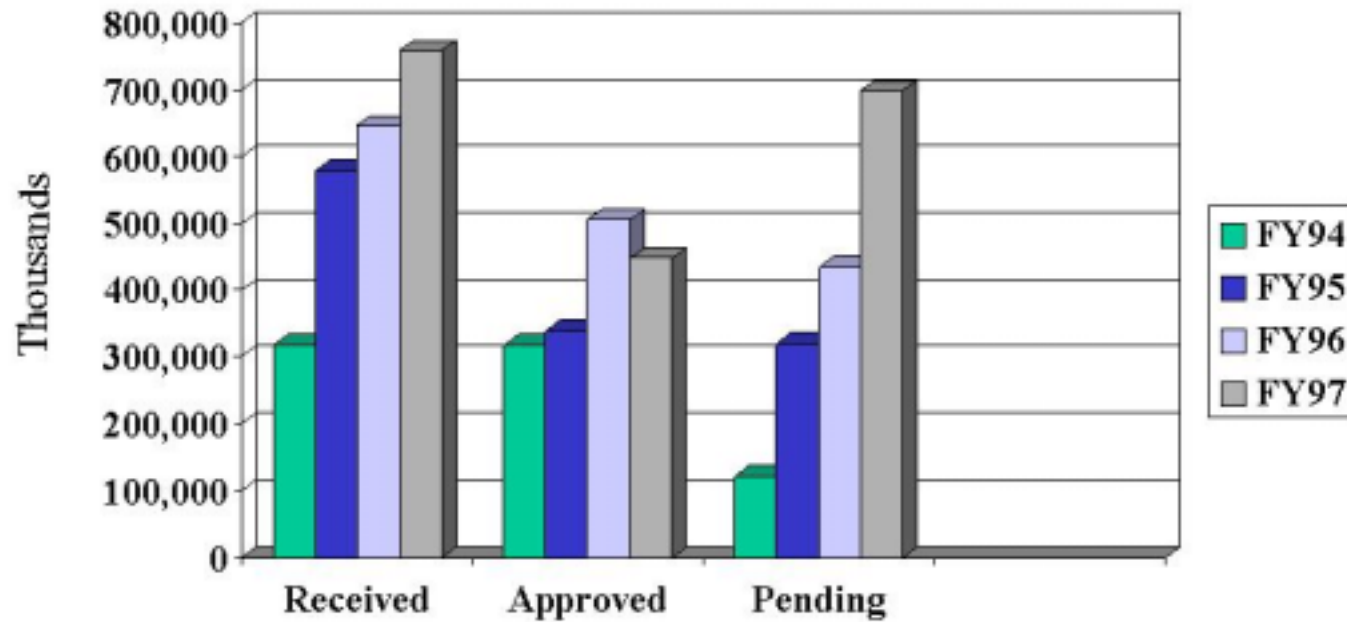
¹ The number of immediate relatives of U.S. citizens included in these figures is assumed to be 254,000 (239,000 in FYs 1992-1994). Immediate relatives may enter without any limitation; however, the limit for family-sponsored preference visa immigrants in a fiscal year is equal to 480,000 (465,000 in FYs 1992-1994) minus the number of immediate relatives admitted in the preceding year. The limit of family-sponsored preference visas cannot go below a minimum of 226,000--the worldwide limit of 480,000 minus 254,000 (465,000-239,000 in FYs 1992-1994).

² Plus unused family 4th preference visas.

³ Visas not used in higher preferences may be used in these categories.

⁴ Plus unused employment 4th and 5th preference visas.

Chart 1-1 — Trends in Immigrant Adjustment of Status Applications: FYs 1994-1997



■	FY 1994	317,164	317,544	121,067
■	FY 1995	577,719	339,399	320,730
■	FY 1996	646,585	505,230	435,250
■	FY 1997	759,292	448,044	699,332

The impact of the backlog in adjustment of status applications on the composition of legal immigrants during FYs 1995-1997 is unknown. Demographic information is not stored in the INS immigrant automated case tracking system until aliens are approved for legal permanent residence.

Other Factors Affecting Legal Immigration in FYs 1995-1997

Demand to immigrate. The annual number of family and worker petitions filed with INS is a leading indicator of the demand to immigrate because for most aliens, having a petition filed is the first step in the immigration process. An increase in the total number of family and worker petitions from 596,000 in FY 1995 to 789,000 in FY 1996 and to 972,000 in FY 1997 suggests a decline in immigration was not likely. In addition, economic conditions favorable to immigration, including low unemployment, prevailed during the FY 1995-1997 period.

Changes in immigration limits and immigrant classes of admission. New categories represented less than 1 percent of legal immigration during FYs 1995-1997. The maximum worldwide limits on immigration decreased 25,000 (less than 4 percent) from 700,000 during FYs 1992-1994 to 675,000 beginning in FY 1995 (see Table 1-1). The 25,000 decrease resulted from three changes: (1) a 55,000 limit for dependents of IRCA legalized aliens was in effect only during FYs 1992-1994, (2) Diversity immigration limits increased 15,000 from 40,000 in FYs 1992-1994 to 55,000 beginning in FY 1995, and (3) the maximum family preference limit was increased from 465,000 during FYs 1992-1994 to 480,000 beginning in FY 1995.

The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA). IIRIRA, enacted in September 1996, was directed at enhancing enforcement activities against illegal immigrants and expediting the removal of criminal and deportable aliens, along with many other provisions. Some of the provisions of IIRIRA, including 3 and 10 year bars to admissibility for aliens unlawfully present in the United States, may make it more difficult for illegal aliens living in the United States to adjust to legal permanent residence. However, most of the provisions of IIRIRA were not effective until April 1997. That and the adjustment of status backlog make it very unlikely that IIRIRA affected legal immigration before FY 1998.

Immigrant Characteristics

There were relatively few changes in the demographic characteristics of legal immigrants during FYs 1995-1997 compared to the preceding 3 years, FYs 1992-1994. However, because of the backlog in adjustment of status cases during FYs 1995-1997 and the fact that the characteristics of persons in the backlog are unknown, it may be misleading to draw conclusions about trends in the composition of legal immigrants from these data.

Category of Admission

One of the few categories showing an increase in legal immigrants in each year of the FY 1995-1997 period was immediate relatives of U.S. citizens. The proportion of immigrants who were immediate relatives increased from 27 percent during FYs 1992-1994 to 35 percent during FYs 1995-1997 (see Table 1-2). This increase was expected partly because of the naturalization beginning in FY 1995 of IRCA legalized aliens who could then sponsor their immediate relatives, primarily spouses and children, for legal permanent residence.

Family preference immigration exceeded 226,000 in both FY 1995 and FY 1996 because the carryover provisions of immigration law allow higher limits when the previous year's total for immediate relatives of U.S. citizens minus the number of unused employment preferences falls below 254,000. In FY 1995 the family preference limit was set at 253,721 because of unused employment preferences the previous year. In FY 1996 the limit was 311,819 because employment preference and immediate relative immigration were lower than expected in FY 1995 due to the adjustment of status backlog. In FY 1997, the limit (226,000) was not reached because of the backlog.

Table 1-2 — Immigrants Admitted for Legal Permanent Residence by Major Category of Admission: FYs 1995-97 vs. 1992-94

Category of Admission	1995		1996		1997		1995-97		1992-94	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	720,461	100.0	915,900	100.0	798,378	100.0	2,434,739	100.0	2,682,685	100.0
New arrivals	380,291	52.8	421,405	46.0	380,718	47.7	1,182,414	48.6	1,538,492	57.3
Adjustments of status	340,170	47.2	494,495	54.0	417,660	52.3	1,252,325	51.4	1,144,193	42.7
Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens¹	222,254	30.8	302,090	33.0	322,440	40.4	846,784	34.8	746,336	27.8
Spouses	123,238	17.1	169,760	18.5	170,263	21.3	463,261	19.0	419,486	15.6
Parents	48,382	6.7	66,699	7.3	74,114	9.3	189,195	7.8	183,562	6.8
Children	48,740	6.8	63,971	7.0	76,631	9.6	189,342	7.8	137,259	5.1
Children born abroad to alien residents	1,894	0.3	1,660	0.2	1,432	0.2	4,986	0.2	6,029	0.2
Family-sponsored preferences	238,122	33.1	294,174	32.1	213,331	26.7	745,627	30.6	651,860	24.3
Unmarried sons/daughters of U.S. citizens	15,182	2.1	20,909	2.3	22,536	2.8	58,627	2.4	38,486	1.4
Spouses and children of alien residents	144,535	20.1	182,834	20.0	113,681	14.2	441,050	18.1	361,555	13.5
Married sons/daughters of U.S. citizens	20,876	2.9	25,452	2.8	21,943	2.7	68,271	2.8	67,771	2.5
Siblings of U.S. citizens	57,529	8.0	64,979	7.1	55,171	6.9	177,679	7.3	184,048	6.9
Employment-based preferences	85,336	11.8	117,499	12.8	90,607	11.3	293,442	12.1	386,501	14.4
Priority workers	17,339	2.4	27,501	3.0	21,810	2.7	66,650	2.7	47,623	1.8
Prof. w/advanced degree or of excep. ability	10,475	1.5	18,462	2.0	17,059	2.1	45,996	1.9	102,301	3.8
Skilled, professionals, unskilled	50,245	7.0	62,756	6.9	42,596	5.3	155,597	6.4	212,213	7.9
Chinese Student Protection Act	4,213	0.6	401	0.0	142	0.0	4,756	0.2	48,212	1.8
Needed unskilled workers	7,884	1.1	11,849	1.3	8,702	1.1	28,435	1.2	28,289	1.1
Other skilled, professionals	38,148	5.3	50,506	5.5	33,752	4.2	122,406	5.0	135,712	5.1
Special immigrants	6,737	0.9	7,844	0.9	7,781	1.0	22,362	0.9	22,627	0.8
Investors	540	0.1	936	0.1	1,361	0.2	2,837	0.1	1,086	0.0
Pre-1992	X	Z	X	Z	X	Z	X	Z	651	Z
Diversity programs	47,245	6.6	58,790	6.4	49,374	6.2	155,409	6.4	108,435	4.0
Permanent	40,301	5.6	58,245	6.4	49,360	6.2	147,906	6.1	X	Z
Transition	6,944	1.0	545	0.1	14	0.0	7,503	0.3	108,435	4.0
Legalization dependents	277	0.0	184	0.0	64	0.0	525	0.0	141,690	5.3
Refugees and Asylees	114,664	15.9	128,565	14.0	112,158	14.0	355,387	14.6	365,814	13.6
Refugee adjustments	106,827	14.8	118,528	12.9	102,052	12.8	327,407	13.4	337,369	12.6
Asylee adjustments	7,837	1.1	10,037	1.1	10,106	1.3	27,980	1.1	28,445	1.1
Other categories	12,563	1.7	14,598	1.6	10,404	1.3	37,565	1.5	282,049	10.5
Amerasians	939	0.1	956	0.1	738	0.1	2,633	0.1	31,191	1.2
Parolees, Soviet and Indochinese	3,086	0.4	2,269	0.2	1,844	0.2	7,199	0.3	37,686	1.4
Suspension of Removal ²	3,168	0.4	5,811	0.6	4,628	0.6	13,607	0.6	4,701	0.2
Total, IRCA legalization	4,267	0.6	4,635	0.5	2,548	0.3	11,450	0.5	193,642	7.2
Other	1,103	0.2	927	0.1	646	0.1	2,676	0.1	14,829	0.6

¹ May enter without limitation; the number admitted may affect the limit on family sponsored preference immigrants in the following year.

² Became "cancellation of removal" effective April 1, 1997, with the implementation of the Illegal Immigration and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996.

X Not Applicable. Z Rounds to less than .05 percent

Employment preference immigration was below the 140,000 annual limit during each year of the FY 1995-1997 period due to slack demand for most preferences and the backlog in adjustment of status applications. Admissions in the third preference exceeded the 40,000 annual limit in FY 1996 due to the use of previously unused visas from higher preference categories. Demand for unskilled worker visas remained high during FYs 1995-1997; the 10,000 limit would probably have been reached in FY 1995 and FY 1997 were it not for the backlog.

The number of refugees and asylees adjusting to legal permanent residence averaged about 120,000 during each year of the FY 1995-1997 period. Refugees accounted for more than 90 percent of the combined total since asylee adjustments are limited to 10,000 per year. As in 1992-1994, most of the refugees adjusting status were natives of the former republics of the Soviet Union and Vietnam (see Refugee section). The leading country of birth for asylees during FYs 1995-1997 was the People's Republic of China.

The number of aliens admitted under the Diversity Program during FYs 1995-1997 averaged 52,000 each year. This was slightly less than the 55,000 annual limit. The leading countries of birth for diversity immigrants during this period included the former Soviet Union, Poland, Albania, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Bangladesh.

Region and Country of Birth

North America passed Asia to become the leading source continent for legal immigrants in FY 1996. By FY 1997, 39 percent of legal immigrants were from North American countries compared to 33 percent from Asian countries (see Table 1-3). Mexico was the leading country of birth during FYs 1995-1997, followed by the Philippines, Vietnam, China, and India. These five countries were the birthplace of 38 percent of legal immigrants during FYs 1995-1997.

Geographic Residence of Immigrants

Immigration remained highly selective in terms of both State and metropolitan area of intended residence during FYs 1995-1997. Six States, including California, New York, Florida, Texas, New Jersey, and Illinois, have been the most popular destinations of legal permanent residents since 1971. These six States were the intended residence of 68 percent of legal immigrants during FYs 1995-1997 and 71 percent during FY 1992-1994 (see Table 1-4).

The leading metropolitan destinations for immigrants during FYs 1995-1997 were New York City and Los Angeles, which received 15 percent and 7 percent, respectively, of all legal immigrants. Ten metropolitan areas accounted for 45 percent of all legal immigrants during FYs 1995-1997. These same metropolitan areas were the destination of 49 percent of legal immigrants during FYs 1992-1994.

Age and Gender of Immigrants

Immigrant populations have traditionally been younger and more heavily female than the total U.S. resident population. FYs 1995-1997 followed the traditional age pattern. During the period, 45 percent of all immigrants granted legal permanent residence were between the ages of 15 and 34 compared with 29 percent for the total U.S. population in 1996.³ A smaller proportion of immigrants than the U.S. resident population were ages 65 and over (5 percent versus 13 percent). More than one-half of immigrants were female during both FYs 1995-1997 (54 percent) and FYs 1992-1994 (52 percent).

³ Statistical Abstract of the United States 1997, p.16. Reference: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1997* (117th edition.) Washington, DC 1997.

Table 1-3 — Immigrants Admitted for Legal Permanent Residence by Region and Selected Country of Birth: FYs 1995-97 vs. 1992-94

Region and Country of Birth		1995	1996	1997	1995-97		1992-94	
		Number	Number	Number	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total		720,461	915,900	798,378	2,434,739	100.0	2,682,685	100.0
Africa		42,456	52,889	47,790	143,135	5.9	81,581	3.0
Asia		267,931	307,807	265,786	841,524	34.6	1,007,591	37.6
Europe		128,185	147,581	119,898	395,664	16.3	464,562	17.3
North America		231,526	340,540	307,488	879,554	36.1	957,653	35.7
Caribbean		96,788	116,801	105,299	318,888	13.1	301,655	11.2
Central America		31,814	44,289	43,676	119,779	4.9	155,628	5.8
Other North America		102,924	179,450	158,513	440,887	18.1	500,370	18.7
Oceania		4,695	5,309	4,342	14,346	0.6	14,663	0.5
South America		45,666	61,769	52,877	160,312	6.6	156,606	5.8
Unknown		2	5	197	204	Z	29	Z
Top countries (1995-97 rank)								
1	Mexico	89,932	163,572	146,865	400,369	16.4	451,761	16.8
2	Philippines	50,984	55,876	49,117	155,977	6.4	178,014	6.6
3	Vietnam	41,752	42,067	38,519	122,338	5.0	178,694	6.7
4	China	35,463	41,728	41,147	118,338	4.9	133,013	5.0
5	India	34,748	44,859	38,071	117,678	4.8	137,254	5.1
6	Dominican Republic	38,512	39,604	27,053	105,169	4.3	106,824	4.0
7	Cuba	17,937	26,466	33,587	77,990	3.2	71,938	2.7
8	Ukraine	17,432	21,079	15,696	54,207	2.2	53,709	2.0
9	Jamaica	16,398	19,089	17,840	53,327	2.2	45,343	1.7
10	Russia	14,560	19,668	16,632	50,860	2.1	41,347	1.5
11	Korea	16,047	18,185	14,239	48,471	2.0	53,396	2.0
12	El Salvador	11,744	17,903	17,969	47,616	2.0	62,151	2.3
13	Haiti	14,021	18,386	15,057	47,464	1.9	34,429	1.3
14	Poland	13,824	15,772	12,038	41,634	1.7	81,398	3.0
15	Canada	12,932	15,825	11,609	40,366	1.7	44,092	1.6
16	Colombia	10,838	14,283	13,004	38,125	1.6	50,866	1.9
17	United Kingdom	12,427	13,624	10,651	36,702	1.5	50,628	1.9
18	Pakistan	9,774	12,519	12,967	35,260	1.4	36,068	1.3
19	Peru	8,066	12,871	10,853	31,790	1.3	37,828	1.4
20	Yugoslavia (former)	8,307	11,854	10,750	30,911	1.3	8,818	0.3
Subtotal		475,698	625,230	553,664	1,654,592	68.0	1,857,571	69.2

Z Rounds to less than .05 percent.

Table 1-4 — Top States and Metropolitan Areas of Intended Residence of Immigrants Granted Legal Permanent Residence: FYs 1995-97 vs. 1992-94

	State and Metropolitan Area	1995	1996	1997	1995-97		1992-94	
		Number	Number	Number	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total		720,461	915,900	798,378	2,434,739	100.0%	2,682,685	100.0%
	<u>State</u>							
1	California	166,482	201,529	203,305	571,316	23.5%	805,251	30.0%
2	New York	128,406	154,095	123,716	406,217	16.7%	444,962	16.6%
3	Florida	62,023	79,461	82,318	233,802	9.2%	180,643	6.7%
4	Texas	49,963	83,385	57,897	191,245	7.9%	199,071	7.4%
5	New Jersey	39,729	63,303	41,184	144,216	5.9%	142,682	5.3%
6	Illinois	33,898	42,517	38,128	114,543	4.7%	132,676	4.9%
7	Massachusetts	20,523	23,085	17,317	60,925	2.5%	70,124	2.6%
8	Virginia	16,319	21,375	19,277	56,971	2.3%	49,532	1.8%
9	Maryland	15,055	20,732	19,090	54,877	2.3%	48,244	1.8%
10	Washington	15,862	18,833	18,656	53,351	2.2%	51,188	1.9%
	Subtotal	548,260	708,315	620,888	1,877,463	77.1%	2,124,373	79.2%
	<u>Metropolitan Area</u>							
1	New York, NY	111,687	133,168	107,434	352,289	14.5%	380,738	14.2%
2	Los Angeles – Long Beach, CA	54,669	64,285	62,314	181,268	7.4%	313,484	11.7%
3	Miami, FL	30,935	41,527	45,707	118,169	4.9%	91,202	3.4%
4	Chicago, IL	31,730	39,989	35,385	107,105	4.4%	121,637	4.5%
5	Washington, DC-MD-VA	25,717	34,327	31,444	91,488	3.8%	80,166	3.0%
6	Orange County, CA	18,187	17,580	18,190	53,957	2.2%	74,946	2.8%
7	Houston, TX	14,379	21,387	17,439	53,205	2.2%	72,128	2.7%
8	San Francisco, CA	15,773	18,171	16,892	50,836	2.1%	61,022	2.3%
9	Boston-Lawrence, MA ¹	16,750	18,726	13,937	49,413	2.0%	57,386	2.1%
10	San Diego, CA	12,077	18,226	14,758	45,061	1.9%	55,602	2.1%
	Subtotal	331,904	407,386	363,501	1,102,791	45.3%	1,308,311	48.8%

¹ Includes Lowell and Brockton

Projected Legal Immigration: 1998-2002

Due primarily to uncertainty about the timing of reduction in the backlog of adjustment of status applications pending a decision, legal immigration is not projected to 2002. In the last Triennial Comprehensive Report on Immigration, INS projected legal immigration to increase to about 900,000 in FY 1998 and FY 1999 due to the large wave of naturalizations and subsequent sponsorship of relatives for immigration by IRCA legalized aliens and other immigrants during the mid-1990's. Legal immigration was expected to stabilize at a lower level of about 850,000 for at least several years and then gradually increase as naturalizations increased, reflecting the overall higher levels of legal immigration during the last decade of the 20th century than previously. However, largely because of the backlog in adjustment of status applications, legal immigration in FY 1998 reached only 660,000. Complete immigrant data for FY 1999 are not available at the time of this report, but since the backlog continued to increase, legal immigration for the year is not expected to have exceeded the FY 1998 level of 660,000.

Legislation enacted since the last projections, the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) of 1998 and the Haitian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act (HRIFA) of 1999, is expected to increase legal immigration during FYs 2000-2002. NACARA permitted certain Cuban and Nicaraguan nationals and dependents who had been residing illegally in the United States since December 1, 1995 to apply for adjustment of status by April 1, 2000. In addition, certain nationals of Guatemala, El Salvador, and former Soviet Bloc countries residing in the United States before specified dates in 1990 were allowed to apply for cancellation of removal under special rules and then for adjustment of status. HRIFA allowed certain Haitian nationals who were present in the United States on December 31, 1995 to apply for adjustment of status by April 1, 2000. The total population that will apply for adjustment of status under NACARA or HRIFA is unknown, but INS estimates that it may number several hundred thousand. The timing of adjustments of status under NACARA and HRIFA is dependent on progress in reducing the adjustment of status backlog.

Summary and Conclusions

During FYs 1995-1997, U.S. immigration policy continued to promote admission based on family reunification, employment, and humanitarian concerns. A total of 2.43 million aliens were granted legal resident status during FYs 1995-1997. This was less than the 2.68 million becoming legal immigrants during FYs 1992-1994 principally because of a backlog in the processing of adjustment of status applications at INS.⁴

Assuming no major changes in immigration policy, future growth in immigration levels is expected to come primarily from family-sponsored aliens. Refugee admissions constitute a small proportion of the total and fluctuate annually depending on international political events. Demand for employment-based visas has not recently exceeded the supply. During the FY 1995-1997 period, demand for family-preference visas exceeded the supply, and admissions increased for immediate relatives who are exempt from numerical limit. Once the backlog in adjustment of status applications is reduced, these trends are likely to lead to higher levels of family-sponsored immigration as permanent residents naturalize and become eligible to sponsor their relatives for legal permanent residence.

⁴ For detailed INS data on immigrants and other categories of admission to the United States, consult the INS web site at <http://www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/aboutins/statistics>

Refugees and Asylees

The Refugee Act of 1980, which added Sections 207 and 208 to the INA, established the definition of a refugee in U.S. law and set out refugee and asylum policy. As defined in U.S. law, persons who cannot return to their home country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion are considered to be “refugees.” The INA states that aliens who are still within their home country and who face persecution for any of these reasons also may be designated as refugees by the President after appropriate consultation with the Judiciary Committees of Congress. The President sets a ceiling annually for the admission of refugees after consideration of the need for resettlement of refugees of special humanitarian concern to the United States and after consultation with Congress. The ceiling may be adjusted throughout the year in emergency situations.

Several related but distinct sets of numbers are commonly used to describe refugee admissions to the United States. Refugees apply and are approved overseas under the program established in the annual consultation and under the limits of the ceiling. Actual annual arrivals of refugees always lag the number approved because of the arrangements that must be made for resettlement of refugees. Finally, 1 year after admission to the United States, refugees are eligible to apply to adjust their status to that of permanent resident alien. Each concept describes a different stage in refugee processing, and although closely related, they are not equivalent. In addition, the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966 remains in effect. Under its provisions, Cuban nationals who enter the United States in something other than refugee status may adjust status after 1 year to become permanent resident aliens.

An asylum applicant must meet the definition of a refugee. The distinction between a refugee and an asylee is the location where the application is made. The refugee applies overseas to enter the United States, while the potential asylee applies within the United States or at a port-of-entry (POE). No numerical limits are imposed on grants of asylum.⁵ An asylee may apply to adjust status to that of permanent resident alien after 1 year in asylee status. There is no limit on the number of refugees who may adjust status in a year, but the law limits asylee adjustments to 10,000 a year.

Refugee Approvals

The number of persons approved overseas for refugee status decreased from 115,000 in FY 1992 to less than 78,000 in FY 1997. These statistics are depicted in Table 1-5. Decreases in the number of persons approved from Vietnam and Laos accounted for the large decrease in the East Asia region. While the total number of approvals in the Eastern Europe and Soviet Union region remained fairly constant, a growing proportion were citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina and fewer were citizens of the republics of the former Soviet Union. The number of refugees from Africa grew during the period, mostly due to an increase in the number of Somali citizens approved for refugee status. Refugee approvals for Latin America and the Near East did not change greatly over the period.

The annual number of refugees who adjust status to become permanent resident aliens is closely linked to the number of refugee arrivals in immediately preceding years. The average annual number of refugee arrivals was 111,000 during the FY 1992-94 period and 81,000 during the FY 1995-97 period. The number of adjustments under the Refugee Act exhibited a similar pattern; the number of adjustments decreased from 106,000 a year during the FY 1992-94 period to 90,000 during the FY 1995-97 period. The Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966 provides a vehicle for adjustment to permanent resident alien status of Cubans outside the context of the Refugee Act. The number of Cubans adjusting status under this law was nearly 9,600 in FY 1995, increasing to 20,100 in FY 1996, and 28,000 in FY 1997.

⁵ A partial exception to this statement was established in Section 601 of the IIRIRA of 1996. Persecution for resistance to coercive population control methods was defined as one type of persecution for political opinion, and a limit of 1,000 grants annually of asylum and refugee status combined was placed upon this category.

Table 1-5 — Refugee Approvals by Geographic Area of Chargeability:
FYs 1992-1997

Geographic Area of Chargeability	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Total	115,330	106,026	105,137	78,936	74,491	77,600
Africa	5,667	6,813	5,748	4,895	9,681	7,854
East Asia	31,751	38,314	40,639	23,023	11,891	6,810
Eastern Europe and Soviet Union (former)	68,131	52,090	48,963	45,900	47,611	56,379
Latin America and Caribbean	4,121	3,991	2,513	1,933	982	1,860
Near East	5,660	4,818	7,229	3,068	4,246	4,539
Not Reported	0	0	45	117	80	158

Asylum Applications and Approvals

The annual number of persons claiming asylum in the United States has fluctuated greatly since 1980, when the law governing asylum was enacted, but the trend has been sharply downward since 1995. The total number of cases filed in FY 1997 was 86,000 as shown in Table 1-6, nearly 69,000 fewer than the 154,000 applications filed in FY 1995. Two developments were responsible for much of that trend: settlement of the “ABC” class action lawsuit and asylum reform.

The trend in asylum claims filed by persons from Central America during the past few years has been affected by the number of claims filed or reopened under the terms of the American Baptist Churches (ABC) v. Thornburgh settlement. Under the terms of this 1991 class action settlement, many nationals of El Salvador and Guatemala were allowed to file or renew their claims for asylum. Nationals of Guatemala had a filing deadline of March 31, 1992, which was the peak year for their claims at nearly 44,000. The 187,000 nationals of El Salvador who had registered for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in 1991 became eligible to file for asylum at the expiration of their TPS period in 1992. They were later granted additional time under deferred enforced departure periods, which extended until December 1994, and they ultimately had until January 31, 1996 to apply for asylum under the ABC agreement. The number of ABC claims filed by nationals of El Salvador surged during 1996 before the filing deadline. Filings of ABC claims by Salvadorans numbered more than 75,000 in FY 1995 and nearly 66,000 in FY 1996 but declined to about 8,000 in FY 1997.

In March 1994, the INS published proposed regulations designed to streamline the asylum decision process, discourage frivolous claims, and integrate the work of the Asylum Officer Corps with the work of the immigration judges. These regulations took effect on January 4, 1995, and reduced the number of new non-ABC claims. New receipts that are neither ABC nor reopened cases dropped dramatically, from 122,589 in calendar year 1994 to 54,142 in 1995, 53,692 in 1996, and 49,938 in 1997. However, nationals of Mexico, Somalia, and Iraq significantly increased their number of asylum claims during FYs 1995-97. Mexicans submitted 18,820 asylum applications in FY 1997, the most of any country during that fiscal year, compared to only 614 in FY 1992. The period from October 1996 to April 1997 saw many applications filed by Mexicans who wished to be placed in proceedings before an immigration judge in order to file for suspension of deportation before the effective date of the modifications enacted in the IIRIRA.

Table 1-6 — Asylum Cases Received by the INS and Individuals Granted Asylum by Selected Nationality: FYs 1992-1997¹

Nationality	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Asylum Cases Received by the INS						
Total	103,964	144,166	146,468	154,464	128,190	85,866
Albania	130	318	314	378	365	1,007
Bangladesh	1,044	3,776	3,682	1,858	1,033	1,162
China	3,464	14,465	10,871	4,987	3,515	5,653
Cuba	2,376	2,699	3,209	1,260	766	638
El Salvador	6,781	14,616	18,600	75,138	65,588	8,156
Ethiopia ¹	1,003	1,227	897	922	1,093	1,087
Guatemala	43,915	34,198	34,433	23,202	13,892	10,898
Haiti	5,374	10,908	9,499	2,571	4,425	5,378
Honduras	1,127	2,805	4,385	3,163	1,836	1,851
India	3,224	5,698	4,508	3,351	4,684	4,926
Iraq	167	176	148	125	443	2,351
Liberia	1,378	877	799	745	757	898
Mexico	614	6,397	9,323	9,703	9,729	18,820
Nicaragua	2,075	3,180	4,682	1,908	2,034	1,674
Pakistan	3,348	4,536	3,323	2,486	1,412	1,441
Peru	1,148	3,150	2,885	1,405	786	975
Philippines	4,022	3,986	2,384	971	1,654	1,389
Somalia	154	135	123	205	1,161	1,919
Soviet Union ¹	5,856	5,955	4,592	2,437	2,360	2,731
Yugoslavia ¹	2,331	2,774	1,866	768	897	902
Other Countries	14,433	22,290	25,945	16,881	9,760	12,010
Individuals Granted Asylum						
Total	3,959	7,464	11,764	17,493	18,556	15,896
Afghanistan	90	70	159	335	216	262
Albania	23	30	47	147	433	378
China	277	336	414	535	433	497
Cuba	214	319	494	524	634	312
El Salvador	110	74	187	237	195	172
Ethiopia ¹	347	352	672	1,098	818	448
Guatemala	94	172	373	1,065	889	344
Haiti	120	636	1,060	749	1,491	694
India	78	357	584	1,108	1,709	886
Iran	231	347	638	785	607	408
Iraq	70	101	214	204	918	5,540
Liberia	209	247	305	615	694	471
Nicaragua	341	291	520	484	418	129
Pakistan	83	176	219	512	442	264
Peru	113	241	470	688	464	243
Somalia	122	121	150	286	529	708
Soviet Union ¹	442	923	1,175	1,556	1,440	1,108
Sudan	73	133	248	397	343	266
Syria	16	638	1,032	680	304	35
Yugoslavia ¹	78	496	906	1,414	2,470	629
Other Countries	828	1,404	1,897	4,074	3,109	2,102

¹ For comparability, Ethiopia, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia are represented throughout as they were constituted at the beginning of FY 1992. "Cases received" includes reopened cases as well as new applications filed.

The number of claims for asylum granted each year varies within a much narrower range than the number filed because a relatively small proportion of the claims are successful. Approximately one-fifth of the adjudicated cases were approved during the FY 1995-97 period.⁶ Iraqis and nationals from the former Yugoslavia and Soviet Union had the most approvals during the 3-year period. When an asylum case is granted, the applicant's spouse and minor children are also eligible for asylum status, whether they are already in the United States or waiting outside the country to join the asylee.

From 1980-1990, the annual number of asylees who adjusted to permanent resident alien status was limited by the statutory cap of 5,000. By the late 1980's, more persons had been granted asylum than this cap could accommodate, and the backlog of eligible applicants for adjustment of status was large and still growing. The Immigration Act of 1990 set a new annual cap of 10,000 and waived the limit for persons whose applications had been filed before June 1, 1990. This provision allowed a record number of 22,664 asylees to adjust their status in FY 1991, and the total number of asylee status adjustments also exceeded 10,000 in FYs 1992 and 1993. By FY 1994, the backlog was cleared, and only 6,000 asylees adjusted status. Because more than 10,000 persons have been granted asylum annually since 1994, the cap on adjustment of status should be reached again in future years.

The data reported herein on asylum applicants cover only the casework of the INS Asylum Officer Corps, the so-called *affirmative* asylum cases. These figures do not include those cases filed by apprehended aliens in removal proceedings, the so-called *defensive* asylum cases, or the cases denied by the INS that later are renewed with immigration judges, who are part of the Executive Office for Immigration Review in the Department of Justice. However, the statistics on adjustments to permanent resident status cover all aliens previously granted asylum (including spouses and children), whether the grant was by INS officials or immigration judges.

Refugee Projections: FYs 1998-2002

Trends in the number of refugees admitted to the United States are among the most difficult to predict of all categories of immigration because they are dependent on political events worldwide as well as on U.S. response to those events. Based on expected refugee ceilings for the next several years, refugee admissions are projected to continue declining gradually from the peak of 115,000 reached in FY 1992, leveling at approximately 80,000 a year. This trend would return refugee admissions to a level approaching that of the mid-1980's.

Adjustments to permanent resident alien status under the Refugee Act typically follow the trend in refugee arrivals, lagging admissions by slightly more than 1 year. This pattern will be disrupted over the next several years as the INS attempts to reduce a growing backlog in adjustments to legal permanent status. While the number of refugee adjustments may average about 80,000 per year from 1998-2002, the number of adjustments may be as low as 30,000 towards the beginning of the period. The number of adjustments will increase as INS begins to reduce the backlog.

Adjustments of status under the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966 will also be affected by the backlog in adjustment of status processing. Cuban Adjustment Act adjustments totaled 28,000 in 1997 but may be half that total in 1998-2000. The number of adjustments is expected to average 20,000 a year over time. Therefore, total adjustments of status under the two Acts are expected to average about 100,000 during FYs 1998-2002, with substantially lower annual numbers in the beginning of the period and substantially higher numbers later if the INS is able to reduce its processing backlog.

⁶ Data on asylum are tabulated by both cases and persons. Standard analytical practice calls for calculation of trends in asylum filing and approval rates based on cases. However, analysis of the population granted asylum, including the number subject to the cap on adjustment of status, requires data on persons given asylum status.

Asylum Projections: FYs 1998-2002

Trends in the number of asylum applicants are even more volatile and difficult to project than trends in refugee admissions because they are not subject to overseas control, and they respond more quickly to world events. Recent legislation also changes the outlook for new asylum applicants and those with cases pending. As part of an effort to discourage claims that are filed merely as a defense against removal, section 604 of IIRIRA placed a limit of 1 year on the length of time a person could be present in the United States before filing an asylum application.⁷ This measure is expected to reduce the number of claims filed in future years. The NACARA and HRIFA laws described above (p. 15) are likely to reduce the number of asylum claims granted, since asylum applicants who benefit from this legislation will have their applications for cancellation of removal or adjustment of status considered under these laws first. The adjudication of NACARA claims is being integrated into the affirmative asylum process, and asylum applicants who are granted relief under NACARA will have their asylum claims administratively closed. Because these nationality groups account for more than 80 percent of the asylum backlog, the number of asylum claims granted is expected to fall.

The number of asylum claims projected for FYs 1998-2002 is shown in Table 1-7. These estimates are lower than the average for recent years, based on the assumption that the asylum reform measures of the past few years will continue to have the desired effect of deterring frivolous claims. On the other hand, a reduction in frivolous claims should result in a higher **proportion** of claims granted by INS. The number of persons granted asylum is projected to be 13,000 in FY 1998 and to increase to 17,000 for the next 2 years before falling to about 15,000. In the longer term, as fewer claims are filed and the backlog of claims is reduced, the number of claims granted is projected to decline.

Table 1-7 — Projected¹ Asylum Cases Filed with the INS and Individuals Granted Asylum: FYs 1998-2002

Projections	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Asylum cases filed with INS	55,000	45,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Individuals granted asylum by INS	13,000	17,000	17,000	15,000	15,000

¹ Projections were developed by INS.

⁷ Exceptions are possible for changed country conditions or other extenuating circumstances.

Parolees

A parolee is an applicant for admission to the United States who is allowed to enter on a case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit. A grant of parole does not constitute a formal admission to the United States, and in most cases it permits the alien to remain in the country for only a brief, temporary period. When the conditions supporting the parole cease to exist, the parolee must depart.

Parole Categories

In general, the parole authority allows the INS to respond in individual cases that present needs for which no remedies are available elsewhere in the Immigration and Nationality Act. The prototype case arises in an emergency situation. For example, the sudden evacuation of U.S. citizens from dangerous circumstances abroad often includes household members who are not citizens or permanent resident aliens, and these persons are usually paroled. When aliens are brought to the United States to be prosecuted or to assist in the prosecution of others, they are paroled. Parole is sometimes used to reunite divided families. More examples of the use of parole are presented below.

Since FY 1992, INS has classified paroles in six categories. A brief description of each follows.

Port-of-Entry Parole

Port-of-entry parole is the single category used most often. It applies to a wide variety of situations and is used at the discretion of the supervisory inspector, usually to allow short periods of entry. Examples include allowing otherwise inadmissible aliens to attend a funeral and permitting the entry of emergency workers, such as fire fighters, to assist with an emergency.

Advance Parole

Advance parole may be issued to persons residing legally in the United States in something other than lawful permanent resident (LPR) status, who need to travel abroad and return, and whose conditions of stay do not allow for routine re-entry.

Deferred Inspection Parole

Deferred inspection parole may be conferred by an immigration inspector when aliens appear at a port-of-entry with documentation, but after preliminary examination, some question remains about their admissibility which can best be answered at their point of destination.

Humanitarian Parole

Humanitarian parole is the category reserved for aliens who need specialized medical care in the United States or because a severe medical condition makes detention or removal of an otherwise inadmissible alien inappropriate, or for similarly compelling reasons.

Significant Public Benefit Parole

Significant public benefit parole is intended for use with aliens who enter to take part in legal proceedings, either as witnesses or defendants. It may also be invoked in other situations where legal grounds for admitting an alien do not currently exist, but the entry of the alien is considered advisable in the public interest.

Overseas Parole

Overseas parole is the only category that may begin a period of long-term admission to the United States. In recent years, most of the aliens INS has processed through overseas parole have arrived under special legislation or international migration agreements.

Grants of Parole, FY 1995 through FY 1997

The period from FY 1995 through FY 1997 saw an increase in parole admissions compared with the experience of the early 1990's. In FY 1995, 113,542 grants were made under the parole authority.⁸ In FY 1996, parole admissions increased to 138,334, and FY 1997 saw a further increase to 199,843. Table 1-8 displays the total number of paroles granted during these fiscal years for the 16 countries that had at least 2,500 paroles in FY 1997.

While INS may grant parole to a national of any country, the 16 countries listed in Table 1-8 accounted for 74, 70, and 74 percent of all paroles in the 3 years, respectively. Our neighboring countries were prominent. Mexico's share of the total increased from 18 percent in FY 1995 to 34 percent in FY 1997, and Mexico's increase of nearly 48,000 accounted for more than half of the overall rise in paroles. Cuba had the most paroles in FY 1995, second in FY 1996 and third in FY 1997. Many paroles from Cuba took place under the Cuban Migration Agreement, which is discussed below. Canada also placed among the top three countries in each year.

Analysis of the trends in parole by category provides some insight into their causes. Table 1-9 displays the parole data by groupings for the top five countries in each group for the 3 years.

Port-of-entry parole, the largest category, grew by more than 90,000 from FY 1995 to FY 1997. Our immediate neighbors, Mexico and Canada, represented 31 percent of these paroles in FY 1995, and their share increased to 41 percent in FY 1997. The other paroles in this category were distributed among many countries. Most countries showed an increase between the 2 years, but Mexico accounted for 41 percent of the substantial increase of 92,700 in the category. Because port-of-entry parole allows for some administrative flexibility to deal with situations that could not have been foreseen, its use can be expected to rise as the volume of international travel rises.

Table 1-8 — Grants of Parole for Leading¹ Countries of Citizenship:
FYs 1995-1997

Country of Citizenship	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997
All countries	113,542	138,334	199,843
Mexico	20,378	27,904	68,045
Canada	6,404	8,985	15,392
Cuba	31,446	19,833	8,247
United Kingdom	3,116	6,335	8,187
China (PRC)	3,012	4,099	6,105
India	2,235	3,997	5,485
Soviet Union (former)	3,145	3,304	5,364
Philippines	3,691	3,478	5,218
El Salvador	1,949	3,587	4,467
Germany	1,274	2,471	3,348
Korea	1,373	2,345	3,281
Japan	1,373	2,230	3,146
Colombia	1,430	2,266	3,098
Pakistan	1,398	2,207	2,733
Brazil	843	1,793	2,672
Taiwan	855	1,665	2,612

¹ Countries are listed if their nationals had at least 2,500 grants of parole in FY 1997; rankings are in order by 1997 totals.

⁸ The data system from which these figures are taken counts the number of admissions under the parole authority, not the number of persons paroled during the year; some persons may have been paroled and counted more than once. These tables were calculated from Table 607 maintained by the INS Statistics Branch, Office of Policy and Planning.

The volume of advance paroles also rose greatly between FY 1995 and FY 1997, but at less than 5 percent of all paroles in these years, its impact on the total trend was small. Nationals of Canada and Mexico were the most numerous in both years. The increase in grants of advance parole to nationals of Mexico accounted for half of the increase in this category between 1995 and 1997.

The use of deferred inspection increased only slightly from FY 1995 to FY 1997, and its share of total paroles fell from 8 percent in FY 1995 to 5 percent in FY 1997. Mexico and Canada again predominated in this category, with 26 percent to 29 percent of the deferred inspections during the 3-year period. The increases by country were modest.

The use of humanitarian, significant public benefit, and overseas parole can vary substantially, because they are invoked to deal with emergency situations, illness or medical necessity, legal actions, and overseas programs that admit persons of special concern to the United States. This combined category is the only one whose use declined during the 3-year period. For this reason, these categories are combined for presentation in Table 1-9. Nationals of Mexico and Canada were admitted in substantial numbers in this category as well as in the others.

Cuban nationals made up more than half of these admissions in FY 1995 and FY 1996, but their share fell to 20 percent in FY 1997. Most of these Cubans were arriving under the 1994 Migration Agreement with Cuba. In that accord the United States agreed to admit 20,000 persons yearly by direct application in Havana, to prevent dangerous attempts to escape from Cuba by raft. Some Cuban nationals who apply for this program qualify for admission as refugees and some as lawful permanent residents; the remainder are paroled. The number of Cuban parole entries was at its highest in FY 1995, soon after the agreement was made. It has dropped in later years, suggesting that more of the Cubans have been entering in other immigration categories. Under the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966, as amended, Cuban parolees may adjust their status to that of lawful permanent resident after 1 year of residence in the United States.

Persons from the former Soviet Union made up another noteworthy group in this combined parole category. Special legislation⁹ in 1989 established a program for adjustment to lawful permanent resident status of persons from the former Soviet Union, Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia who had been paroled after being denied refugee status. The program applied to persons who were granted parole beginning August 15, 1988. Most of the persons who qualified for this immigration benefit arrived in the early 1990's, before the time period covered in Table 1-9. Like the Cubans, these parolees may apply to adjust to lawful permanent resident status after 1 year of U.S. residence.

Projected Parole Admissions: 1998-2002

The use of parole to admit aliens to the United States has proved very difficult to forecast, since it is invoked in so many situations, some of them very ordinary and others reflecting emergency conditions in distant nations. As the volume of international travel increases, the use of port-of-entry parole will grow to respond in unforeseen situations. The growth in the number of foreign nationals living in the United States in temporary statuses will give rise to more instances of the need for advance parole. The existence of the Cuban Migration Agreement will keep parole admissions from Cuba relatively high, and international events may cause the use of humanitarian, significant public benefit, and overseas parole to rise and fall. In summary, admissions under the parole authority are likely to remain relatively high by historical standards.

⁹ Section 599E of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1990, Public Law 101-167, commonly known as the "Lautenberg Amendment."

Table 1-9 — Grants of Parole by Category, by Selected Country of Citizenship:¹
FYs 1995-1997

Class of Admission/Country of Citizenship	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997
All paroles	113,542	138,334	199,843
Port-of-Entry paroles	58,652	93,822	151,385
Mexico	14,898	22,018	52,677
Canada	3,209	5,417	9,121
United Kingdom	2,343	5,208	7,013
China (PRC)	2,376	3,436	5,301
India	1,623	3,343	4,696
Advance paroles	2,367	5,256	8,998
Mexico	284	1,008	3,571
Canada	486	1,084	1,885
United Kingdom	113	313	333
India	114	212	246
El Salvador	37	187	196
Deferred inspections	9,311	8,483	10,109
Mexico	1,742	2,018	2,000
Canada	670	459	795
United Kingdom	404	457	499
Colombia	230	211	313
Jamaica	193	185	304
Humanitarian, significant public benefit, and overseas paroles	43,212	30,316	29,355
Mexico	3,454	2,539	9,797
Cuba	28,139	17,488	5,893
Canada	2,039	1,972	3,591
Soviet Union (former)	1,697	1,150	2,398
El Salvador	212	877	1,043

¹ The top five countries in each category in FY 1997 were selected; rankings are in order by 1997 totals.

Nonimmigrants

A nonimmigrant is an alien admitted to the United States for a specified temporary period but not for permanent residence.

Temporary Visitors to the United States

While the typical nonimmigrant is a tourist who visits for a few days to several months, there are numerous classes of nonimmigrant admission. These include business travelers, students, ambassadors, representatives to international organizations, temporary workers, exchange visitors, treaty traders and investors, and intracompany transferees. A number of classes of admission allow nonimmigrants to enter the United States for temporary employment purposes: workers with specialty occupations; with extraordinary ability or achievement in the sciences, arts, education, business, or athletics; and to perform services or labor when unemployed persons capable of performing such tasks cannot be found in the United States. Authorization to work in this country also may be granted to exchange visitors who enter temporarily to study, teach, or conduct research; intracompany transferees who enter to provide temporary managerial or executive services in the United States to international firms or corporations; and industrial trainees. Although not considered as employed in the United States, treaty traders and treaty investors enter temporarily to conduct trade or to invest substantially in enterprises under the provisions of treaties of commerce and navigation between the United States and foreign states.

Nonimmigrant Admission Levels

During the 1980's, nonimmigrant admissions fluctuated from 11.8 million in FYs 1981 and 1982 to a low of 9.3 million in FY 1984. Since FY 1984, nonimmigrant admissions have increased each year, to nearly 25 million in FY 1996 (Table 1-10).¹⁰ For the 7-year period FYs 1990-96, nonimmigrant admissions have increased by more than 41 percent.

Visitors for pleasure is the class of admission with the largest number of entries, generally constituting approximately three-quarters of total nonimmigrant admissions. *Temporary visitors for business*, the second largest class, make up about 15 percent of all nonimmigrant entries. The U.S. Department of Commerce defines "tourists" as visitors for pleasure, business travelers, and students. Under this definition, tourists account for approximately 93 percent of all nonimmigrant visitors to the United States each year, showing an increase during the FY 1990-96 period of 42 percent. While entries by temporary workers and trainees and their families increased by more than 81 percent during this period, intracompany transferees and their families had the largest percentage increase (108 percent). Visitors for pleasure and visitors for business each had a 42 percent increase, followed by students and their families (29 percent), and exchange visitors and their families (20 percent). Treaty traders and treaty investors and their families declined for the period (-6 percent).

More than half of all nonimmigrants entering the United States in FY 1996 were citizens of five countries: Japan, the United Kingdom, Germany, Mexico, and France (Table 1-11). These five countries were the leading countries for the entire 1990-96 period, although the ranking has varied somewhat, with Germany supplanting Mexico in third place after 1990. For each of these countries, visitors for pleasure outnumbered all other classes of entry. The largest number of pleasure visitors in FY 1996 was from Japan, which also had the highest percentage in this category (89 percent). Approximately 8 out of 10 nonimmigrants from the top 10 countries were pleasure visitors; this percentage has remained steady throughout the 1990-96 period. In contrast, the percentage of pleasure visitors of total nonimmigrant admissions from China was 58 percent.

¹⁰ No data are available for FY 1997.

Table 1-10 — Nonimmigrant Admissions by Major Classes of Admission:
FYs 1990-1996

Class of admission	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	Change 1990-1996	
								Number	Percent
All classes	17,574,055	18,920,045	20,910,880	21,566,404	22,118,706	22,640,539	24,842,503	7,268,448	41.4%
Temporary visitors	16,079,666	17,234,400	19,229,066	19,879,443	20,318,933	20,886,867	22,880,330	6,800,664	42.3%
Business	2,661,338	2,616,335	2,788,069	2,961,092	3,164,099	3,275,334	3,770,326	1,108,988	41.7%
Pleasure	13,418,328	14,618,065	16,440,997	16,918,351	17,154,834	17,611,533	19,110,004	5,691,676	42.4%
Treaty traders/investors and families	147,536	155,049	152,385	144,644	141,030	131,777	138,568	-8,968	-6.1%
Students and families	355,207	374,420	401,287	403,273	427,721	395,480	459,388	104,181	29.3%
Temporary workers, trainees, and families ¹	174,161	203,417	217,073	221,676	260,065	274,246	315,693	141,532	81.3%
Exchange visitors and families	214,644	223,430	231,292	239,405	259,171	240,364	256,725	42,081	19.6%
Intracompany transferees and families	102,555	113,034	120,779	132,143	154,237	173,745	213,762	111,207	108.4%
Other ²	500,286	616,295	558,998	545,820	557,549	538,060	578,037	77,751	15.5%

¹ Includes workers, spouses, and children under the U.S.-Canada Free-Trade Agreement, beginning January 1989 and ending December 1983, and the North American Free-Trade Agreement, beginning January 1994.

² Includes People's Republic of China and Taiwan.

Table 1-11 — Nonimmigrant Admissions by Selected Class of Admission for Top Ten Countries of Citizenship: FYs 1990-1996
(Numbers in Thousands)

Country of Citizenship	1990		1991		1992		1993		1994		1995		1996	
	All classes	Visitors for Pleasure	All classes	Visitors for Pleasure	All classes	Visitors for Pleasure	All classes	Visitors for Pleasure	All classes	Visitors for Pleasure	All classes	Visitors for Pleasure	All classes	Visitors for Pleasure ³
All countries	17,574	13,418	18,920	14,618	20,911	16,441	21,566	16,918	22,119	17,155	22,641	17,612	24,843	19,110
Japan	3,359	2,845	3,422	2,927	3,963	3,480	3,632	3,185	3,974	3,524	4,463	4,002	4,521	4,006
United Kingdom	2,490	1,990	2,681	2,208	2,998	2,494	3,178	2,656	3,116	2,550	3,023	2,436	3,376	2,725
Germany ¹	1,214	981	1,437	1,211	1,713	1,477	1,894	1,651	1,709	1,445	1,836	1,551	2,035	1,701
Mexico	1,301	1,020	1,406	1,098	1,539	1,193	1,575	1,214	1,659	1,276	1,178	861	1,299	916
France	780	590	836	654	869	685	902	719	907	718	975	778	1,083	860
Brazil	377	286	490	371	489	366	552	432	622	492	829	689	883	728
Korea	279	148	356	213	400	251	441	290	581	395	673	466	850	585
China ²	363	208	411	234	477	277	566	318	615	383	666	408	722	422
Italy	438	335	518	419	648	544	634	530	614	502	592	478	656	528
Netherlands	334	240	372	281	401	306	438	342	462	355	475	362	527	400
Other	6,646	4,780	6,991	5,002	7,414	5,368	8,701	6,390	7,024	5,515	7,931	5,581	8,891	6,239

¹ Prior to FY 1991, includes East and West Germany.

² Includes People's Republic of China and Taiwan.

³ These figures differ from those published earlier in the INS Statistical Yearbooks due to corrections in the data base.

NOTE: Rankings for countries based on admissions for FY 1996.

Data on nonimmigrants admitted to the United States are based on their arrival as recorded by the collection of Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record. These data represent each arrival event during the year rather than the actual number of individuals admitted. Nonimmigrants in several classes of admission, especially students and visitors for business, often make multiple entries to the United States in any given year. Additionally, the nonimmigrant data do not include most of the millions of citizens of Canada and Mexico who cross the border for brief periods of time.

Projected Nonimmigrant Flows: FYs 1998-2002

During the 5-year period 1998-2002, nonimmigrant admissions are expected to increase, though it is difficult to predict the magnitude due to the variability of the political, economic, and social factors that affect foreign travel throughout the world and to the United States. Countries in Asia, Latin America, and to a lesser extent Europe experienced economic difficulties to varying degrees beginning in 1997, but recoveries in these economies would spur pleasure and business travel for the 1998-2002 period. The relative strength of the U.S. economy and, consequently, the U.S. dollar will have an impact on the flow of travelers to the United States. Since more than 90 percent of nonimmigrant admissions are tourists, future changes in nonimmigrants admitted to the United States, the third most visited destination of international tourists, will be greatly influenced by factors that affect this group. U.S. economic policy toward free trade (e.g., expanding free trade agreements with countries in addition to Canada and Mexico, and lowering trade tariffs for China) and social policy toward facilitation of travel to this country (e.g., the Visa Waiver Pilot Program) will continue to encourage travel from abroad. Additionally, the expansion of less restrictive travel policies abroad (e.g., from the republics of the former Soviet Union and China) and the continued development of capitalist economies and the spread of technology throughout the world will have a profound impact on international travel. Changes in these economic, social, and political arenas point to expansion of travel throughout the world and to the United States for the period 1998-2002.

As already noted, although millions of nonimmigrants are admitted to the United States each fiscal year, they do not remain in the country. Nonimmigrants are admitted for a temporary period of time and are to depart by the end of that period. Each year, some nonimmigrants adjust to lawful permanent resident status under various provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act. In recent years, approximately 20 percent of the immigrants admitted in any fiscal year originally entered the United States as nonimmigrants. The vast majority of nonimmigrants, however, depart the United States as required under the terms of their visas.

Emigration

Accurate, detailed, and timely estimates of emigration would contribute to the development and evaluation of U.S. immigration policy, the derivation of accurate national and local population estimates (including estimates of unauthorized immigration), and the measurement of coverage of the decennial censuses. The limited data that are available indicate that emigration is a large and growing component of U.S. population change. However, partly because of inherent methodological difficulties, data on emigration from the United States are not being collected.

The collection of statistics on emigration from the United States was discontinued in 1957; no direct measure of emigration has been available since then. Estimates compiled in this country and statistics collected in other countries indicate that emigration from the United States has increased steadily since the 1950's, exceeding 100,000 per year since 1970. These figures are consistent with U.S. historical experience; between 1900 and 1990, approximately 38 million immigrants were admitted, and an estimated 12 million foreign-born persons emigrated. That is, for every 100 immigrants admitted, approximately 30 returned home, as shown in Table 1-12.

Table 1-12 — Immigration and Emigration by Decade: 1901-1990

Period	Immigrants to the United States (Thousands)	Emigrants from the United States (Thousands)	Net Immigration (Thousands)	Ratio: Emigration/Immigration
Total, 1901-90	37,869	11,882	25,987	0.31
1901-10	8,795	3,008	5,787	0.34
1911-20	5,736	2,157	3,579	0.38
1921-30	4,107	1,685	2,422	0.41
1931-40	528	649	-121	1.23
1941-50	1,035	281	754	0.27
1951-60	2,515	425	2,090	0.17
1961-70	3,322	900	2,422	0.27
1971-80	4,493	1,176	3,317	0.26
1981-90	7,338	1,600	5,738	0.22

Note: Figures on emigration are estimated for the years after 1957.

Source: 1992 *Statistical Yearbook*, Table 1; Warren, Robert and Ellen Percy Kraly, 1985, *The Elusive Exodus: Emigration From the United States*, Population Trends and Public Policy Occasional Paper No. 8, March, Population Reference Bureau; Washington, DC

During the 1995-1997 period, the U.S. Census Bureau used an annual emigration figure of 220,000 foreign-born (and 48,000 native-born) persons for computing national population estimates (see Chapter 2). Statistics on U.S. residents migrating to other countries published by the United Nations and the Economic Commission for Europe show that emigration from the United States is likely to be well above 200,000 foreign-born persons annually, as shown in Table 1-13.

Table 1-13 — Estimated Emigration from the United States to Top 10 Countries of Destination in the 1980's

All countries	241,000
Mexico	55,000
United Kingdom	31,000
Germany	29,000
Canada	20,000
Japan	19,000
Philippines	19,000
Guatemala	13,000
Indonesia	9,000
Australia	8,000
Italy	4,000

Source: 1989 United Nations Demographic Yearbook, Table 28; Economic Commission for Europe, CES/710/Corr

The U.S. Census Bureau has produced the most recent estimates and projections of emigration from the United States. The following information is presented in detail in the Bureau's population projections for the 1999 to 2100 period.¹¹

The Census Bureau produces projections of the U.S. resident population by age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, and nativity. The projections are based on assumptions about future births, deaths, and international migration. Although alternative series are produced, the preferred or middle series is most commonly used. The Census Bureau releases new national population projections periodically.

A major innovation in the current projections of international migration relates to the projection of the emigration of foreign-born residents. Because the Census Bureau projected the foreign-born population separately in the projections, they were able to model foreign-born emigration as a function of the population at risk, in much the same way that they projected mortality. Thus, foreign-born emigration is projected, in all series, as rates by age and sex, rather than as a constant number of emigrants.

For the middle series, the foreign-born emigration *rates* were assumed to remain constant throughout the duration of the projections. That is, trends in emigration are driven mainly by the size of the foreign-born population and secondarily by its composition by age, sex, and country of birth. The standardized rate (standardized by age, sex, and country on the 1990 base population) was set at 12.1 per thousand population.

As shown in Table 1-14, the Census Bureau's assumptions yield an annual emigration trend from 252,000 in 1991 to 278,000 in 1998, the base year for the projections. Approximately 300,000 foreign-born persons are projected to emigrate annually in the 2000-2005 period. In the longer run, emigration is projected to increase steadily with the growth of the foreign-born population, finally reaching a projected annual level of more than 500,000 in the year 2100. The juxtaposition of constant in-migration with increasing emigration throughout the last 70 years of the 21st century yields a decline in the numerical level of annual net migration to the United States, and an even greater decline in the impact of this component relative to overall population size.

¹¹ *Methodology and Assumptions for the Population Projections of the United States: 1999 to 2100.* Population Division Working Paper No. 38, Frederick W. Hollmann, Tammany J. Mulder, and Jeffrey E. Kallan, Population Projections Branch, Population Division, Bureau of the Census, January 2000.

Table 1-14 — Estimates and Projections of Foreign-Born Emigration from the United States:
1991 to 2005

Year	Foreign-born emigration (1000s)
1991	252
1992	254
1993	258
1994	260
1995	263
1996	267
1997	273
1998	278
1999	282
2000	287
2001	293
2002	298
2003	303
2004	308
2005	311

Source: U. S. Census Bureau Internet release, January 13, 2000

Background

In 1994, the INS released detailed estimates of the undocumented immigrant population residing in the United States as of October 1992.¹² Those estimates were useful for a variety of purposes, including planning and policy development at the national and State level, evaluating the effects of proposed legislation, and assessing the fiscal impacts of undocumented immigration.

Over the next 2 years, the INS revised those estimates and updated them to October 1996. The estimates presented here incorporate data on the foreign-born population collected by the Census Bureau, improvements in the methodology recommended by the General Accounting Office (GAO), suggestions provided by outside reviewers, and further analyses of the INS' data sources and estimation procedures. Estimates of the undocumented population were computed for each State of residence and for nearly 100 countries of origin.¹³

Although they have been useful for a number of purposes, the INS' estimates, including those shown in this report, have inherent limitations. They have been restricted to periodic "snapshots" of the total population; the estimated rate of population growth is an average number that does not measure trends; and some of the data series used to make the estimates were projected from earlier periods.

After completing the estimates described in this report, the INS began to develop a new approach that would generate annual estimates of the population and illustrate trends in population growth, using the most dependable annual data series available. The new estimates will be based primarily on information from INS administrative data systems and detailed estimates of the foreign-born population collected each month in the U.S. Census Bureau's monthly Current Population Survey (CPS). Unfortunately, the estimates derived using the revised methodology have not been completed and reviewed. Therefore the estimates presented here are as of October 1996.

Methodology

The estimates presented here were constructed by combining detailed statistics, by year of entry, for each component of change that contributes to the undocumented immigrant population residing in the United States. For most countries of the world, the typical way of entering the undocumented population in the United States is to arrive as a nonimmigrant and stay beyond the specified period of admission. This segment of the population, referred to here as "nonimmigrant overstay," constitutes approximately 40 percent of the undocumented immigrant population residing in the United States. The rest of the population, more widely publicized, enter surreptitiously across land borders, usually between official ports-of-entry. This part of the population, often referred to as having "entered without inspection" (EWI), includes persons from nearly every country, but a large majority of them are from Mexico; most of the rest are natives of Central American countries.

Primary Sets of Data

The figures presented here were constructed from five primary sets of data. Each following data set was compiled separately for 99 countries and each continent of origin.

¹² Warren, Robert, 1994, *Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States, by Country of Origin and State of Residence: October 1992*, Unpublished paper, U. S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

¹³ Warren, Robert, 1997, *Estimates of the Undocumented Population Residing in the United States: October 1996*, Unpublished paper presented at the Joint Statistical Meetings, Anaheim, CA.

- **Entered before 1982**—Estimates (as of October 1988) of the undocumented immigrant population who established residence in the United States before 1982 and did not legalize under IRCA. The assumption used to estimate this part of the population is based on estimates developed by the Census Bureau using data from the June 1988 CPS.
- **Net overstay**s—Estimates for 1982-1996 of the net number of nonimmigrant overstay, for 99 countries of origin, derived from INS databases. Estimates were derived by using the following methods:
 - Matching INS I-94 arrival/departure records.
 - Adjusting for the incomplete collection of departure forms.
 - Subtracting the number of nonimmigrant overstay who subsequently either departed or adjusted to legal resident status.
- **Net EWIs**—Estimates of the number from each country who EWI and established residence here between 1982 and 1996. A very large majority of all EWIs are from Mexico. Average annual estimates of Mexican EWIs were derived by using the following methods:
 - Adjusting the CPS count of the Mexican-born population for underenumeration.
 - Subtracting the estimated legally resident population counted in the CPS.
 - Subtracting the estimated number of net overstay.
- **Mortality**—Estimates of the annual number of deaths to the resident undocumented immigrant population. The estimates were derived using an annual crude death rate of 3.9 per 1,000, which was computed using a modified age distribution of IRCA applicants and age-specific death rates of the foreign-born population.
- **Emigration**—Estimates of the number of undocumented immigrants who resided here at the beginning of a period (either October 1988 or October 1992), and who emigrated from the United States in the following 4-year period. Estimates of emigration are based on statistics published by the Census Bureau in Technical Paper No. 9.

Construction of the Estimates

Estimates of the undocumented immigrant population were derived for October 1988, October 1992, and October 1996 for 99 individual countries and for each continent of origin. The calculations were carried out separately for overstay and EWIs.

Estimates by State of Residence

In the earlier estimates for October 1992, the State distribution of the undocumented population was based on the U.S. residence pattern of each country's applicants for legalization under IRCA; the results were totaled to obtain State totals. This equation assumed that, for each country of origin, undocumented immigrants who resided in the United States in October 1992 had the same U.S. residence pattern as IRCA applicants from that country. The revised and updated estimates presented here incorporate the same assumption for the October 1988 undocumented population. However, it was necessary to develop new methods of deriving State estimates for October 1992 and 1996 that would reflect more recent patterns of geographic settlement.

As noted, the estimates of the undocumented population were constructed separately for overstay and EWIs. This separation permitted the distribution of the overstay and EWI populations to States using data most appropriate for the type of population. For overstay, the cohorts that arrived in the 1988-1992 and

1992-1996 periods were distributed to State of residence based on annual estimates of overstay by State of destination for 1986-1989. For EWIs who entered during these periods, the totals were distributed to State of residence using INS statistics for the early 1990's on the destination of the beneficiaries of aliens who legalized under IRCA.

Limitations

Estimating the size of a hidden population is inherently difficult. Overall, the figures presented here generally reflect the size, origin, and geographic distribution of the undocumented immigrant population residing in the United States during the mid-1990's. The estimates probably reduce the range of error for the total population to a few hundred thousand rather than a few million, which was the error range during the late 1970's and into the 1980's. The estimates for most countries should be fairly precise because they were constructed primarily from data on nonimmigrant arrivals, departures, and adjustments of status that have relatively small margins of error.

Although the estimates are based on the most reliable information available, they clearly have limitations. For example, the estimates make no allowance for students or other long-term nonimmigrants, and the estimates for some countries could be understated because of special circumstances (for example, Dominicans entering illegally via Puerto Rico, ships arriving undetected from China, etc.).

The figures for some countries overstate the actual undocumented population. In general, the net nonimmigrant overstay figures are more likely to be overestimates than underestimates because the collection of departure forms for long-term overstays who depart probably is less complete than for those who depart within the first year.

The estimates include a large number of persons who have not been admitted for lawful permanent residence, but are permitted to remain in the United States pending the determination of their status or until conditions improve in their country of origin. This category includes many of the undocumented immigrants from El Salvador, aliens from other countries in a status referred to as "deferred enforced departure," and IRCA applicants whose cases have not been finally resolved.

In a few cases, the estimates appear to be too high, but there is no basis for making downward adjustments. For example, the estimates for the Bahamas appear to be much too large because they imply that a relatively large proportion of the population is residing illegally in the United States, whereas large-scale undocumented immigration from the Bahamas has not been observed previously. In addition, undocumented immigration from Dominica is considerably higher than would be expected based on the number of IRCA applicants from Dominica. This overstatement could have occurred because of processing problems with I-94 arrival/departure documents, with the result that overstays from Dominica are overestimated and those from the Dominican Republic underestimated.

The number of EWIs is the most difficult component to estimate with precision, and errors in this component have the largest effect on the estimated undocumented population from Mexico. In particular, the shortage of information about two components (emigration of legally resident immigrants and the undercount in the CPS) makes it difficult to derive acceptable residual estimates of the number of undocumented immigrants counted in the CPS.

The estimates presented here are based on the most extensive array of figures ever compiled for the purpose; nevertheless, they should be used with caution because of the inherent limitations in the data available for estimating the undocumented immigrant population. This uncertainty was addressed by using alternative assumptions to produce "high" and "low" population estimates for October 1996. In the following discussion of the estimates, the midrange population figures are used for simplicity of presentation.

Results

National Estimates

The total number of undocumented immigrants residing in the United States in October 1996 is estimated to be 5 million (see Table 1-15), with a range of about 4.6 to 5.4 million, depending upon the assumptions used. The estimate for October 1996 is about 1.1 million higher than the revised estimate of 3.9 million for October 1992; this estimate implies that the population grew by approximately 275,000 annually during the 1992-1996 period, about the same as the annual growth of 281,000 estimated for the previous period. The original INS estimates for October 1992 and October 1988, released in 1994, showed average annual growth of 300,000.

The undocumented population grows at varying levels from year to year, but the data available to make these estimates do not permit the derivation of annual figures to measure year-to-year changes. However, the similar levels of growth for the 1988-1992 and 1992-1996 periods, 281,000 and 275,000, respectively, suggest that the overall level of growth has been fairly constant over the past decade. These data also indicate that the rate of growth of the undocumented resident population has declined since 1988.

State of Residence

The estimates for States reflect the well established pattern of geographic concentration of undocumented immigrants in the United States. California was the leading State of residence, with 2 million (40 percent) of the total number of undocumented residents in October 1996. Seven States—California (2 million), Texas (700,000), New York (540,000), Florida (350,000), Illinois (290,000), New Jersey (135,000), and Arizona (115,000)—accounted for 83 percent of the population in October 1996.

The estimated undocumented population of California has grown by an average of about 100,000 annually since the end of the IRCA legalization program in 1988. More than 83 percent of total growth of the undocumented population since 1988 has occurred in the top seven States. With the exception of Massachusetts (6,000), none of the remaining 43 States grew by more than 3,000 undocumented residents annually. In 27 States, the undocumented population grew by an average of 1,000 or less each year.

Country of Origin

Mexico is the leading source country of undocumented immigration to the United States. In October 1996 an estimated 2.7 million undocumented immigrants from Mexico had established residence here, as shown in Table 1-15. Mexican undocumented immigrants constituted about 54 percent of the total undocumented population. The estimated population from Mexico increased by just over 150,000 annually in both the 1988-1992 and 1992-1996 periods.

Table 1-15 — Estimated Illegal Immigrant Population for Top 20 Countries of Origin and Top 20 States of Residence: October 1996

Rank	Country of Origin	Population	Rank	State of Residence	Population
	All Countries	5,000,000		All States	5,000,000
1	Mexico	2,700,000	1	California	2,000,000
2	El Salvador	335,000	2	Texas	700,000
3	Guatemala	165,000	3	New York	540,000
4	Canada	120,000	4	Florida	350,000
5	Haiti	105,000	5	Illinois	290,000
6	Philippines	95,000	6	New Jersey	135,000
7	Honduras	90,000	7	Arizona	115,000
8	Dominican Republic	75,000	8	Massachusetts	85,000
9	Poland	70,000	9	Virginia	55,000
10	Nicaragua	70,000	10	Washington	52,000
11	Bahamas	70,000	11	Colorado	45,000
12	Colombia	65,000	12	Maryland	44,000
13	Ecuador	55,000	13	Michigan	37,000
14	Trinidad & Tobago	50,000	14	Pennsylvania	37,000
15	Jamaica	50,000	15	New Mexico	37,000
16	Pakistan	41,000	16	Oregon	33,000
17	India	33,000	17	Georgia	32,000
18	Ireland	30,000	18	District of Columbia	30,000
19	Peru	30,000	19	Connecticut	29,000
20	Korea	30,000	20	Nevada	24,000
	Other	721,000		Other	330,000

Source: *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1996*, United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, Washington, D.C., 1997, p.198.

The estimated number of Mexican undocumented immigrants who arrived between 1990 and 1996 is based on a comparison of INS administrative data with data on country of birth and year of immigration collected by the Census Bureau in the March 1994, 1995, and 1996 CPSs.¹⁴ Demographic analysis by INS of the CPS data indicates that approximately 230,000 undocumented Mexican immigrants established residence annually between 1990 and 1996. This amount is the net annual addition of undocumented Mexicans who arrived during the period. Note that it does not reflect the average annual growth of the Mexican undocumented population. To compute average annual growth, it is necessary to subtract the number of undocumented Mexicans who lived here in January 1990 and who emigrated, died, or adjusted to legal permanent resident status during the 1990-1996 period. This last step produces the estimate cited above of just over 150,000 annual growth of the Mexican undocumented population since 1988.

In October 1996, 15 countries were each the source of 50,000 or more undocumented immigrants, shown in Table 1-15. The top five countries are geographically close to the United States—Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Canada, and Haiti. Of the top 15 countries, only the Philippines and Poland are outside the Western Hemisphere. The estimated undocumented population from Poland has declined by more than 25 percent (from 95,000 to 70,000) since 1988, possibly reflecting changed conditions in that country over the last several years.

¹⁴ The Census Bureau does not collect information on immigration status in the CPS or in the census.

Although undocumented immigrants come to the United States from all countries of the world, relatively few countries add substantially to the population. The annual growth of the undocumented population can be grouped into four disparate categories: (1) Mexico, with more than half of the annual growth, adds just over 150,000 undocumented residents each year; (2) 6 countries—El Salvador, Guatemala, Canada, Haiti, Honduras, and the Bahamas—each add between 6,000 and 12,000 annually; (3) 13 countries each add about 2,000 to 4,000 annually; and (4) the remaining approximately 200 other countries add a total of about 30,000 undocumented residents each year (see Table 1-15). A large majority of the additions each year, more than 80 percent, are from countries in the Western Hemisphere.

Summary

Approximately 5 million undocumented immigrants were residing in the United States in October 1996, with a range of about 4.6 to 5.4 million. The population was estimated to be growing by about 275,000 each year, which is about 25,000 lower than the annual level of growth estimated by the INS in 1994.¹⁵

California is the leading State of residence with 2 million, or 40 percent, of the undocumented population. The seven States with the largest estimated numbers of undocumented immigrants—California (2 million), Texas (700,000), New York (540,000), Florida (350,000), Illinois (290,000), New Jersey (135,000), and Arizona (115,000)—accounted for 83 percent of the total population in October 1996.

The 5 million undocumented immigrants made up about 1.9 percent of the total U.S. population, with the highest percentages in California, the District of Columbia, and Texas. In the majority of States, undocumented residents comprise less than 1 percent of the population.

Mexico is the leading country of origin with 2.7 million, or 54 percent, of the population. The Mexican undocumented population has grown at an average annual level of just over 150,000 since 1988. The 15 countries with 50,000 or more undocumented immigrants in 1996 accounted for 82 percent of the total population. The large majority, over 80 percent, of all undocumented immigrants are from countries in the Western Hemisphere.

About 2.1 million, or 41 percent, of the total undocumented population in 1996 are nonimmigrant overstays. That is, they entered legally on a temporary basis and failed to depart. The proportion of the undocumented population who are overstays varies considerably by country of origin. About 16 percent of the Mexican undocumented population are nonimmigrant overstays, compared with 26 percent of those from Central America and 91 percent from all other countries.

¹⁵ Compare the Census Bureau estimate (refer to p. 53 in Chapter 2) of 225,000 per year. The two sets of estimates are prepared using different approaches and pertain to slightly different time periods.

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